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WHAT WE KNOW OF THE ELIZABETHAN STAGE¹

The last few years have witnessed the publication of a large number of books, articles, and monographs in whole or in part concerned with the Elizabethan stage. After years of neglect students seem pretty generally to have realized the importance of knowledge concerning the theatrical conditions in which Shakespeare and his contemporaries did their work. Though the permanent elements of their greatness may not indeed have depended upon the equipment and arrangement of their stage, the outward form and technic of their dramas unquestionably did. If all this recent study had resulted in nothing more than this increased appreciation of the Elizabethan dramatists as practical playwrights, it would by no means have been in vain.

But it has achieved other results as well. On many points practical unanimity has been arrived at. It is the purpose of this paper briefly to point out what is thus agreed upon, what is still in dispute, and what is the trend of recent opinion as manifested in the more

¹ The articles, monographs, etc., published since 1905, and referred to in this paper, as a rule simply by the name of the author, are as follows:

Albright, Victor: *The Shakespearean Stage*. New York, 1909.

Archer, William: "The Stage of Shakespeare," *London Tribune*, August 10, 1907; "The Growth of the Playhouse," *London Tribune*, August 17, 1907; "The Fortune Theatre," *London Tribune*, October 12, 1907 (reprinted *New Shakespeariana*, October, 1908; *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 1908); "Under the Greenwood Tree," *London Tribune*, December, 1907. My copy of this article is mislaid and I have been unable to discover another or to find its exact date; "The Elizabethan Stage," *Quarterly Review*, April, 1908.

Baker, G. P.: *The Development of Shakespeare as a Dramatist*. New York, 1907.

Brandl, Alois: "A Review of Albright's Shakespearean Stage," *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 1910.

Bradley, A. C.: "Shakespeare's Theatre and Audience," 1902, in *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, London, 1909.

Brooke, C. F. Tucker: "The Shape of the Shakespearean Stage," [*New York*] *Nation*, December 15, 1910.

Chambers, E. K.: "The Stage of the Globe," *Stratford on Avon Shakespeare*, Vol. X, 1907.

Child, Harold: "The Elizabethan Theatre," chap. x, Vol. VI, *Cambridge History of English Literature*, 1910.

Conrad, Hermann: "Bemerkungen zu W. J. Lawrence's Aufsatz im 45 Jahrbuch, Title and Locality Boards," *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 1910.

Corbin, John: "Shakespeare and the Plastic Stage," *Atlantic Monthly*, March, 1906; "Poetry and the Pivot Stage," *New York Sun*, September 23, 1906.

Creizenach, W.: *Geschichte des neueren Dramas*, Vol. IV, Part I, Book VIII, Halle, 1893-1909.

important studies of the last few years. I shall also, perhaps at more length than they deserve, consider the conclusions I advanced some years ago and the objections raised to them. I shall at this time present little new evidence or argument, but in general limit myself to summarizing the conclusions of others and to making clearer my own views where misunderstandings show them to have been obscure. Convenient subjects for this review are, first, as fundamental to any investigation, the Treatment of the Sources; second, the Construction of the Stage; and third, the Principles of Stage Management.

I

Our chief sources of information besides such contemporary documents as Henslowe's *Diary* and the contracts for theater building, or such contemporary allusions as those in the *Gul's Horne-booke*,

"Elizabethan Stage Theories," *London Times*, November 3, 1905; reprinted in *Littell's Living Age*, December 2, 1905.

"First Folio" *Shakespeare*, editors, Charlotte Porter, Helen A. Clarke, 1907-.

Helmholtz-Phelan, Anna Augusta: "Staging of the Court Drama to 1595," *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, Vol. XXIV, 2; New Series, XVII, 2.

Jusserand, J. J.: *Literary History of the English People*, Vol. III, 1910.

Lawrence, W. J.: "Music in the Elizabethan Theatre," *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 1908; "The Situation of the Lords' Room," *Englische Studien*, 1908; "Title and Locality Boards on the Pre-Restoration Stage," *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 1909.

Lee, Sidney: *Introduction to the Facsimile Reprint of the First Folio of Shakespeare*.

Matthews, Brander: *A Study of the Drama*, Boston, 1910.

Mönkemeyer, Paul: *Prolegomena zu einer Darstellung der englischen Volksbühne zur Elizabeth und Stuart Zeit nach den alten Bühnen-Anweisungen*. Hanover and Leipzig, 1905.

Pollard, A. W.: *Shakespeare's Folios and Quartos*. London, 1909.

Prölsz, Robert: *Von den ältesten Drucken der Dramen Shakespeares*. Leipzig, 1905.

Reynolds, G. F.: "Some Principles of Elizabethan Staging," *Modern Philology*, April, June, 1905; "Trees on the Stage of Shakespeare," *Modern Philology*, October, 1907.

Schelling, Felix E.: *Elizabethan Drama*. Boston and New York, 1908; *The Elizabethan Playhouse*, reprinted from *Proc. Num. and Antiq. Soc. of Philadelphia*, 1908.

Skemp, Arthur R.: "Some Characteristics of the English Stage before the Restoration," *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 1909.

Stevenson, Henry Thew: *Shakespeare's London*. New York, 1905.

Stopes, Mrs. C. C.: "Elizabethan Stage Scenery," *Fortnightly Review*, June, 1907.

Tolman, Albert H.: "Alternation in the Staging of Shakespeare's Plays," *Modern Philology*, April, 1909.

Walkley, A. B.: *Drama and Life*. London, 1907.

Wallace, C. W.: *Children of the Chapel at Blackfriars*. University of Nebraska, 1908.

Wegener, Richard: *Bühneneinrichtung des Shakespeareschen Theaters nach den zeitgenössischen Dramen*. Halle, 1907.

See also the following:

Greg, W. W.: *Henslowe's Diary*, London, 1904; *Papers*, 1908.

Poel, William: "Shakespeare on the Stage in the Elizabethan Manner," *London Times*, Literary Supplement, June 2, 1905.

Mantzius, Karl: *A History of Theatrical Art in Ancient and Modern Times*, transl. by Louise von Cossel; 5 vols., 1903-9.

Wallace, C. W.: "Shakespeare in London," *London Times*, October 2 and 4, 1909, with replies by various persons in the next few issues and in the *Athenaeum*.

each of which must be individually interpreted and valued, are (1) the contemporary pictures, and (2) the plays themselves, especially their directions. Of the pictures those most valuable for our purpose are the four interiors known as the Swan, the "Red Bull," the Roxana, and the Messallina¹ pictures.

Five years ago the Swan picture was the most emphasized of these; but today this attitude has changed. The difficulty of finding in the Swan a place for the curtain, and its lack of three stage entrances show that, however faithful to the playhouse it purports to represent, it could not have represented a typical theater.²

Similarly Lawrence's proof (*Englische Studien*, XXXIX, 404n) that the "Red Bull" picture³ had really nothing to do with the Red Bull Theater, and Albright's discussion of it (40-43) as a stage for the drolls have largely diminished its importance.

As to the Roxana and Messallina pictures, both much alike, opinion is still at variance: Baker (x), and Wallace (8) call both academic stages; Albright (45) places the Roxana in this class, but considers the Messallina to represent perhaps the Red Bull stage;⁴

¹ As this Messallina picture has been republished by Arthur R. Skemp in the *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* for 1909 as a new find, the reader will pardon me for pointing out that this picture was first reprinted by me in 1905, and before that had been unknown to writers on the stage, except for a single line in *Notes and Queries*, 7th Series, VI, 221, where Wm. Rendle, after speaking of the picture on the Roxana title-page, added, "*Messallina* shows faintly nearly the same." To this note later writers apparently had paid no attention.

Note may here be made also of "an old wood cut" of considerable significance provided it be authentic, which Frau Mentzel describes in *Geschichte der Schauspielkunst in Frankfurt*, 38-39, as representing the stage of English comedians in Germany. The picture, according to Frau Mentzel, shows a stage divided by a curtain into a large open front stage and a smaller rear stage, somewhat raised, and reached by two steps. Two sign-boards are shown, on one of which is an illegible inscription; on the other "A room in the house." Personal inquiry has failed to elicit any further information concerning this picture.

² For these objections to the Swan see especially W. J. Lawrence's "Some Characteristics of the Elizabethan and Stuart Stage," *Englische Studien*, XXXII (1903), 36. See also *Some Principles*, I, 7-8. Child (292) regards the picture with more favor than do other recent writers because of its agreement with the details of the Swan mentioned in the Hope contract.

³ In spite of Lawrence's objections to this picture, first made some years ago—the reference given above is not to his first but to his fullest discussion of it—Baker (47, 84), Wegener (19), and Skemp (102, 104) all use this as indeed a picture of the Red Bull Theater in its days as a practical playhouse. In 1905 I had myself, while ignorant of Lawrence's conclusions, pointed out that the picture could not possibly represent the Red Bull Theater in its original condition (*Some Principles*, I, 12-13, note).

⁴ "Messallina was according to its title-page 'Acted with general applause divers times by the Company of his Majesties Revells' who played, according to Fleay, at the Red Bull."—Albright, 44-45.

Wegener—he did not know of the Messallina picture—thinks (20) Roxana portrays a “Singspielhalle”; Skemp considers (102–3) the Roxana to represent a private theater, and the Messallina a public theater, probably the Fortune (115); Misses Porter and Clarke (see, for example, *Antony and Cleopatra*, 172) reconstruct the Globe in accordance with the Messallina print, while Brooke suggests that it may be largely fanciful. In reprinting these pictures I expressed no opinion because I saw no possibility of certainty. One may note, however, that the obviously permanent platforms of both hardly seem likely for academic stages; that the projecting rear stage of the Messallina picture is hardly possible in a public theater where spectators in the boxes, to say nothing of those in the yard, are supposed to have viewed the stage from three sides; and that both, since they are so nearly alike, may therefore, as Schelling (*Elizabethan Playhouse*, 151) supposes, show private theaters. This seems to me especially likely of the Messallina picture. What more probable method of reconstruction could be adopted in turning a hall into a permanent theater, than thus to construct the rear stage as a projecting structure? This is all pure conjecture of course, yet in spite of their late date of publication, and of this doubt as to exactly what each represents, these two views, because they most nearly meet the demands of the directions even of early plays, seem to be the most authoritative pictures of the Elizabethan stage.

As to the value of the stage directions as evidence there is some diversity of opinion. Child (298) finds them untrustworthy because of their doubtful authorship, and the difficulty of determining exactly what sort of playing place they apply to. Wallace (49) says, “It must not be expected however that any study of stage directions or other internal evidence can ever be final in matters of stage history. Such a study at best can be but corroborative, never determinative of data, and may thus rightly serve to illuminate and enliven placid realities.” Baker (72) thinks the directions “make but a weak basis for argument. At best they are the hints of the writer to the experienced stage managers of the day, their short-hand correspondence, so to speak. To us, with our incomplete knowledge of the detailed conditions of the Elizabethan stage, they can convey but half truths.” The directions are indeed tantalizing, often misleading; a ground

plan or a precise contract might settle the construction of a particular theater, but no document could make us surer than we are concerning much of the stage equipment, and no document can ever settle the all-important question of stage management. While fully admitting the value of such finds as Wallace's, we cannot disregard the directions; no matter what documents are discovered, the directions will always remain our ultimate source of information with which everything else must accord, or, like the Swan picture, be discredited. They are among the most trustworthy sources of evidence we possess, and whatever the perplexity or difficulty they occasion, they must be carefully and scientifically studied.

What that scientific study means is only now coming to be recognized. Stage directions, especially those of the Elizabethan plays, are, as sources, in a class by themselves. Perhaps the most important rule to follow in treating them is to be sure that one is studying them and not the guesses of modern editors. Not to speak of editions obviously inaccurate, even Dyce's, the Globe, and Bullen's, except in his accurate reprints, are almost valueless in this study. One must have the quartos and folios themselves, or some of the editions, fortunately now becoming more common, which recognize that changes of stage directions are as indefensible as changes of text. Even the modern division into acts and scenes with indications of more or less appropriate locations, is misleading and likely unconsciously to influence one's conclusions. Any work based upon modern editions is by virtue of that fact alone open to serious question, and it is a pity that Mönkemeyer, Wegener, and Albright have not recognized this.

But even when one has the Elizabethan directions he cannot cease his watchfulness. All early editions are not of equal value. Mönkemeyer, Prölsz, and Pollard have all written interestingly on this subject; Albright's neglect of it, in a study pretending to completeness, seems inexplicable. Disregarding plays never intended for production, we may assign the quartos to three classes: those printed from transcripts made by scribes during the performances, usually for piratical publication; those printed from copies in use in the theater; and those made from the author's manuscript uninfluenced by the stage performance. Into the second of these

classes fall by far the largest number of plays, but examples of the others are not uncommon. All prints of any of these classes, it must also be noted, were intended for readers and were subject to more or less "editorial" modification. The less of this they received, however, the better for our purpose, for the nearer they remain to the original performance.

Perhaps most likely to be true to the stage representation are the quartos based on stenographic transcripts—*Pericles* seems a good example. They were, we may suppose, printed hurriedly without any particular "editing," almost if not quite as taken down. Made primarily for readers, they are likely to omit such purely theatrical directions as those concerning the use of the curtain or the placing of properties (thus in *Pericles* two almost certain discoveries are quite unnoted in the directions). They describe rather the result ("Enter Pericles wet") than the means by which it is secured. Sometimes, in order to save time, the scribe condensed a few minutes of action and dialogue into a single descriptive direction ("Great shouts and all cry the Mean Knight"); sometimes he omitted parts of speeches or even whole scenes. Yet despite these characteristics such copies give, we may safely say, a fairly faithful picture of the theatrical effect of a performance at the date of their publication.

Some quartos were printed from the author's manuscript uninfluenced by the stage manager. Such a play, as we learn from Dekker's introduction, is *The Whore of Babylon*. The play was given at the Fortune but was printed without regard to the acted version. It shows certain curious traits; though it is in places very careless, with entrances and exits left in the greatest confusion, somewhat unusual directions are given with minuteness. It is not unlikely that this represents fairly well the typical Elizabethan author's manuscript, except that where the author was a member of the company these unusual directions may have been communicated by word of mouth. Of course also all authors did not submit their plays in the same condition. Mönkemeyer (63) finds the hand of the author in such directions as "Enter Clifford wounded with an arrow in his neck," *III Henry VI*, II, 6, Q, which gives a bit of information obtainable not from the play itself but from its source, as also in those directions of the type "if possible it may be." Such plays,

printed directly from the author's manuscript, even if never produced,¹ are of great value, for a practical dramatist would scarcely write a play intended for production which would make impossible demands upon the stage manager, and any omissions made in the play when acted would be rather in the way of "poetry" or "eloquence" than of stage effect or action. This was probably true also of such plays as *The Duchess of Malfi*, the published form of which contains portions "that the length of the play would not beare in the Presentment," and of *Sejanus*, of which parts, Jonson says, were rewritten for publication. Such statements though perhaps diminishing the value of the plays as evidence need not greatly discredit them.

Most plays, however, belong to neither of these classes, but seem printed from playhouse versions more or less edited. One such playhouse manuscript unchanged by the printer is Massinger's *Believe as You List*, but it does not conform very well to the tests some editors have suggested for playhouse versions. Sidney Lee in the introduction to the facsimile reprint of the First Folio (xix-xx) says the complete division of a play into acts and scenes, the indication of the "scene," and the list of dramatis personae are "essential to a perfect playhouse transcript." *Believe as You List* contains no list of dramatis personae nor any indication of the "scene" in the form of a direction, though it is divided into acts and in small part—though the divisions were canceled—into scenes. Pollard (72) notes, as some time ago did Furness, the imperative form of directions as indicating origin from a playhouse copy. One imperative direction, "Be ready: ye two merchants," occurs in *Believe as You List*, but also one distinctively

¹ Percy's plays, of which I have made considerable use and to which various writers have objected, seem to me to belong to this class. Even if they never were produced, as Wallace asserts (49, n.; 131, n.) upon no authority and for no adequate reason, they certainly were intended for production and show familiarity with the customs of the stage. Some of them as plays are indeed sufficiently absurd, but they could not have varied widely from the established procedure of the theaters which Percy had in mind, Paul's, or the other children's theater, the Blackfriars. It is unthinkable that any man, much less the author of *The Aphrodisial*, would or could have devised the system of staging which Percy's plays so minutely illustrate. Indeed no reason appears for doubting their validity except that they completely invalidate the alternation theory (by showing that some properties—"those that be outward"—stood outside the curtain) and that they show sitting upon the stage was not confined to the Blackfriars, and thus upset Wallace's theory concerning that custom. Lawrence's (*Title-boards*, 161) and Baker's (78) idea that though competent for Paul's, these plays cannot be used in considering the public theater is true enough as to the construction of the stage, but not, I think, as regards stage customs, for which these plays are peculiarly illuminating.

descriptive direction, "The lute strikes and then the song." There are no explanatory or informational directions, no indicated use of the curtain, and but one direction for business—"Offers to kiss her." Most characteristic of all, however, are the numerous directions for properties; for example, "Table ready and six chairs set out." A few properties certainly used in the play are not thus indicated but as a rule few such directions seem omitted. Such a copy is of the highest value, and its omissions are almost as significant as its provisions. That some properties are not thus arranged for is perhaps because of negligence, perhaps because the particular person of the playhouse whose copy we possess, "the bookholder," the property man, or what not, had nothing to do with them.

Several plays similar to *Believe as You List* exist in printed form—notably Beaumont and Fletcher's *Custom of the Country*, *Love's Pilgrimage*, *The Spanish Curate*, etc. They were printed practically without change, we may therefore conclude, from the playhouse versions. Usually, however, when the plays were printed they were more or less "edited"; sometimes, as in Jonson's *Folio*, nearly every direction was removed and the play rendered theatrically almost unintelligible; sometimes, as in *The Tempest*, the editors attempted, as Pollard points out (125), to give fairly full directions, but literary and descriptive rather than technical and theatrical; sometimes less care was taken, and some directions were omitted, some made more or less descriptive, with information inserted for the reader, and some left in their playhouse form. The second quarto of *Romeo and Juliet* with its "Enter Will Kempe" for "Enter Servingman," IV, 5, shows such editorial negligence. Other directions markedly theatrical which Pollard cites are "Bed put forth," *II Henry VI*, III, 2; "Enter with the Asse head," *Midsummer Night's Dream*, III, 1; "at one door . . . at another" in a forest scene in the same play, to which may be added similar directions in street scenes and the like, where the doors represent the end of the street. Such editorial treatment, more or less thorough, may also have been visited upon plays published from private transcripts or the author's MSS, so that all require practically the same treatment. Stage managers' or prompters' versions left unedited are of course of the greatest value; only upon the strongest grounds are additions to be made to them or

directions questioned; the more the "editing" the more the opportunity for justly supplying directions or of doubting the material realization of those present, but the less also the dependence to be placed upon theories formed on such assumptions. It is right here that the greatest difficulty of our investigation lies. Practically every student begins his study of the plays with certain preconceived ideas based naturally enough upon modern stagecraft; he begins his work almost as certainly with plays more important from a literary point of view, the very plays which in their own day were most likely to be issued with editorial care. These plays as a rule omit directions for properties and perhaps those even for the curtain, thus offering the investigator admirable opportunity for assumption and surmise, but also, be it noted, affording no real proof of anything. Not these, but the plays printed just as they were given, even those "more or less crude anonymous plays" which Albright so conveniently neglects, are the ones which must be most carefully considered and satisfactorily explained if we would learn the truth concerning the Elizabethan stage. Following their guidance in our assumption in plays less completely furnished with directions,¹ we may hope to secure fairly reliable conclusions.

Finally, not even all plays which faithfully represent performances can be used for all investigations. Neglect of this is one great cause of the vagueness in which the whole subject of the stage is even yet enveloped. The endeavor has continually been to discover the construction of the "typical" Elizabethan theater, and evidence from all sorts of plays given at all sorts of dates and in all sorts of places has been accumulated in the vain hope that in this way sure results might be reached. When we remember that the public theaters were peculiar structures built specially for entertainments—some with removable stages, some with fixed ones; that the private theaters were halls permanently remodeled for theatrical purposes;

¹ Perhaps note should be made here that certain directions are not always to be interpreted as would at first appear. There is now pretty general agreement that "enter" may sometimes mean rather "discovered," and that "discovered" usually refers to disclosure by means of the stage curtain, though sometimes use of a bed curtain may be implied. Albright (143) asserts that "set out" "when referring to a regular setting signified the placing of properties on the inner stage behind closed curtains." Mönke-meyer (77) interprets the similar "ready" of the directions as referring to properties "in the wings" so to speak, at hand for immediate use. Perhaps the commoner meaning of "set out" is "placed before the audience."

that at court plays were given in halls only temporarily arranged for the purpose, our natural conclusion can only be that the stages were probably unlike and a contrary opinion must be, not the beginning, but the end of our inquiry. Thus Baker (70), Wegener (7-22), Wallace (44), Chambers (354), Schelling (*Elizabethan Playhouse*, 150), Lawrence, and Skemp (in general treatment) emphasize, as also did I (*Some Principles*, I, 3, 23), the belief that the theaters did differ or might have differed in construction. Similarly, changes both in construction and management must have arisen, it would seem, in the sixty odd years between 1576 and 1642. Archer (*Quarterly*, 446) is perhaps right in saying that there was "a certain standardization of effect"; Creizenach (419), admitting the possibility of difference, thinks all the theaters had alcove stages and balconies; but Albright's assumption that all the theaters all the time had stages essentially alike is more than one can accept offhand. If we could be certain of this it would amazingly simplify our task by rendering unnecessary much preliminary work. But we cannot be certain of it until we prove it: it is the pinnacle, not the cornerstone of our investigation. That it may have been true in large particulars is not unlikely—the transfer of plays from one theater to another is evidence in that direction—but for certainty of result we must classify the extant plays on the basis of the different theaters where they were produced, and arranging them in approximately chronological order, consider all produced at one theater in a given period. Even late publication of a play presented at the theater in question may invalidate its evidence.¹

¹ Only the "First Folio" editors have as yet carried out to any length a study based on these principles, and to this owe largely the clearness and interest of their results. Mönckmeyer (38-57) discusses at some length what plays can with profit be considered as bearing on public theatrical conditions.

Perhaps I may best note here a criticism of my own work. I did not in *Some Principles of Elizabethan Staging* follow the method here advocated and there advised, because of two reasons. It is impossible to assign plays before 1603, the downward limit of my study, to any definite theater with any certainty, because only a few years before had the companies become permanently settled. Moreover, I was primarily interested not in the construction or furnishing of the theaters but in principles of stage management, and these I felt then and still feel to have been true for all performances by professional companies in any given period, whether at the court, the public, or the private theaters. Any other view seemed to me impossible, since the audiences in part were composed of the same people, and were thus dominated by the same theatrical conventions. Thus all plays given by professional companies at any place would be competent evidence, certainly not concerning the equipment or the construction of any theater, but on stage custom and convention. Other students however have not agreed with me, and I shall

II

Whether the Elizabethan stages were in construction really alike or not, the folly of beginning one's discussion with that assumption is apparent when one considers what differences might have existed and have been contended for. Everyone now agrees that the "typical" Elizabethan stage consisted of a platform, uncurtained¹ in front, open as well at the sides, carpeted, it is generally said, with rushes,² and surrounded with a railing;³ a space behind this platform closed by a sliding curtain;⁴ and a balcony with its own curtain and entrances. There were also a space below the stage reached by trap doors, the tiring-room,⁵ machinery by which characters ascended to and descended from some place above,⁶ and in

in the future, not because I am convinced but in order that I may be convincing, distinguish between plays given at court, at the public, and at the private theaters. How far this is from the present custom of investigators appears in Wegener's use (77) of *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, a school play, to prove a feature of construction of the public stage.

¹ Until recently students have said little of the shape of this front stage, accepting both the square or rectangular platform of the Swan and the stage narrowing toward the front apparently shown in the Messallina and Roxana pictures. Brooke maintains that this narrowing may be only apparent, and criticizes Albright for accepting it as the typical form. He does not refer to Skemp, who (114-15) makes even more than does Albright of this narrowing form. As Brooke points out, the stage of the Fortune at least, and presumably therefore that of the Globe, was square-cornered.

Baker (84) and Corbin (380) both assert the use of front curtains in the modern sense at court performances, and I cannot see what is to prevent one from supposing them, for all we know to the contrary, in the private theaters. A stage in a hall is a different matter from one in a roofless building, and a projecting front stage would not only be less necessary there, but would take up space of the greatest value for the seating of spectators. I suggest this, not as something I believe to have been true, but to illustrate how really vague our knowledge is, in that though opposed to general belief it is a reasonable possibility. One should note also Lawrence's assertion that the front curtains at court were employed only at the beginning and at the end of the performance, changes of scene having been unconcealed from the audience ("The Mounting of the Stuart Masques," *New York Dramatic Mirror*, January 2, 1904). As for front curtains in a public theater, Skemp's long argument against them (106-110) appears at this late date rather unnecessary, though Prölsz does (84-85) assert their use and Sidney Lee (Chambers, 355) is said to believe in them.

² Child (303) finds in Wotton's mention of this matting in his account of the burning of the Globe a hint that it was unusual, and points out that it would interfere with the operation of the trap doors.

³ Schelling (*Elizabethan Playhouse*, 155) notes that the presence of this is not supported by the Fortune contract. Perhaps it was one of the "other Contrivitions" unnamed, which were present in the Globe.

⁴ Wegener (8) and Lawrence (*Englische Studien*, XXXII, 48) find no place for a curtain on the Swan stage; Skemp (113) denies its existence at the early Globe as well. Archer (*The Fortune Theater*, and *Quarterly*, 470) notes very plausibly that the curtained space was not boxed in, but presumably was almost if not entirely open at either side.

⁵ Lawrence (*Music*, 50) shows that in the later Blackfriars the balcony was sometimes spoken of as the tiring-room.

⁶ Did the private theaters allow this?

some theaters at least, a "heavens"¹ or roof over part or all of the stage.

Perhaps the most interesting suggestion of the last few years concerning the construction of the stage is that advanced by Corbin (*Sun*, 1906), independently, I imagine, by Archer (*The Fortune Theater*), accepted by Lawrence (*Title-boards*, 166), by Albright (frontispiece), by Schelling (*Elizabethan Playhouse*, 155), and adopted in the New Theater production of *The Winter's Tale*. According to this opinion, the back wall of the stage, instead of being flat, raked forward at either end so that the doors and balcony ran obliquely to the spectator. This arrangement would allow characters entering oppositely to meet naturally or "to pass over the stage," it helps to

¹ Prölsz, ignorant it would appear of the Hope contract, thinks the "heavens" (62) to have been a hanging, probably blue, put across the stage above.

The only contributions I attempted to this phase of the subject were to prove (1) that in spite of the general belief and the evidence of the pictures, the curtain, at least in some theaters, did not conceal the whole end of the stage, but instead of hiding the doors, hung between them; that (2) instead of the usually accepted two doors from the tiring-room to the front stage, there were, at least in the Red Bull, the Blackfriars, the Cockpit, and Paul's, certainly three such entrances, the third presumably being through the rear stage and curtains; and (3) that the curtain did not hide the balcony which had a curtain of its own.

Few argue any longer that the curtain covered the whole end of the stage in all theaters, and only Tolman (5) bases any argument on such an arrangement. Skemp (112) and Jusserand (57) seem to treat all entrances as made through the curtain, Skemp splitting it into several sections, and Jusserand offering no solution for the numerous situations cited by me ("discoveries" made to persons who have just entered) which with his arrangement of the stage become most unreal. That the alcove rear stage existed certainly seems true, therefore, but it has by no means been proved the only form. For arguments in favor of it see Lawrence, "A Forgotten Stage Convention," *Anglia*, June, 1903; *Some Principles*, I, 13-24; Archer, *The Fortune Theater*; and Albright (54-58). Creizenach (424-425) prints interesting pictures of stages in Ghent and Antwerp dating from 1539 and 1561 showing such an arrangement of doors and curtain.

There has been no objection to my argument in favor of these three entrances (*Some Principles*, I, 7, note). Baker (80), however, goes to unwarranted extremes, and seeming to have forgotten that plays were not given in long continuous runs, and that these entrances were cut, not through canvas but through the structural framework of the stage, supposes the doors to have been placed now here and now there in any number as individual playwrights wished.

I must here confess to negligence in having spoken of this third entrance as a door, as Lawrence notes (*Title-boards*, 163). Though I did not intend to give that impression I am not sure that it is so far wrong. I did suggest then that perhaps the front side of the rear stage might have been filled by a pair of doors as well as by the curtains (*Some Principles*, I, 20), and the same idea occurred to Wegener (77), who pierces the doors by windows, and to Baker (80), who would break them by smaller doors. Archer (*Quarterly*, 470) finds these doors to the rear stage plausible but sees great architectural difficulties in accepting them. Yet some such substantial protection would have been almost necessary in the public theaters and would have been convenient in the private theaters. During a play these doors could have been folded back out of the way, or, as hinted in at least a few plays, they may themselves have appeared in certain scenes. Students wishing to find suitable backgrounds for scenes on the front stage will note how well these doors would simulate house fronts or city gates.

explain a difficulty in the use of the balcony presently to be spoken of, it seems to agree with the development of the stage after the Restoration, and therefore, though hardly proved, may at least be tentatively accepted.

The spaces directly before these doors—at either side of the projecting rear stage of the *Messallina* picture, or outside the shadow of the cover in the *Swan*—have recently claimed considerable attention. The “First Folio” editors employ these side stages for asides, which thus cease to be such (*Antony and Cleopatra*, 176; *Cymbeline*, 160, 194, 198; *Othello*, 238); to simulate places a little distance apart (*Measure for Measure*, 131; *Antony and Cleopatra*, 174); for concealment and as a point of observation (*Antony and Cleopatra*, 174; *Othello*, 238) and for the “trees,” which they leave permanently upon the stage. Mönkemeyer suggests (35) that for an actor to walk, after his entrance, down one of these side stages, not at once joining the action, would arouse suspense. But a projecting rear stage shut off by walls or side curtains, which would mark off these passages enough to separate them from the rest of the stage, seems impossible in a public theater, where spectators sat at three sides of the stage. Archer’s cogent argument against Brodmeier’s reconstruction of the stage with its projecting space enclosed on three sides (*Quarterly*, 452–53) is equally applicable here. These side stages were therefore probably not particularly distinct from the rest of the stage, but as on any other stage, served sometimes for speeches and action more or less separated from what was going on in the center of the stage.

The important questions of stage construction at present really in dispute concern the number of curtains, the relation of the curtain to the balcony, and the shape of the balcony. Present opinion on these I shall summarize in turn.

Granting the existence of a balcony curtain and of bed curtains, which no one denies, must we admit of more than one stage curtain? The plays speak indiscriminately, it would seem, of the curtain, the curtains, the arras, the traverse, but apparently mean by these various terms often the same thing. There is no absolutely undeniable direction of which I am aware, calling first for one curtain to be drawn and then a second; at least none has been cited by previous writers. The “First Folio” editors, Corbin, Schelling, Skemp,

Chambers, and Wegener at the Globe (14), all content themselves with but one curtain below, and any argument for more rests not upon evidence but upon inference.¹

For curtains concealing a smaller space than did the stage curtains and placed behind them—inner curtains, we may call them—Albright (58–60) argues on the ground that in the scenes he cites (*Merchant of Venice*, II, 7—the discovery of the caskets—is a fair example) the space revealed is small. Moreover such scenes usually are located in a room and often employ properties. Since either circumstance in Albright's opinion requires the use of the rear stage and thus forbids the drawing of the main curtain for this discovery called for, there must have been a second curtain. But as it is perfectly certain that all room scenes or scenes with properties were *not* performed on the rear stage, and since the main curtain when a small space was to be disclosed need have been drawn open only a short distance—elsewhere Albright himself makes this suggestion—his argument for a second curtain has very little force.²

Assuming for the moment that the curtain so often alluded to in the directions hung from the lower edge of the balcony, we must consider the possibility of a curtain further to the front hiding the balcony and dividing the front stage into two parts—a traverse, to use Wegener's phrase. He would place such a curtain on the Blackfriars' stage (18, 115); Baker would do so (83–96) in the theaters possessing a "heavens"; and Brandl (*Jahrbuch*, 1910) sees no other justification for pillars on the stage than as supports for this curtain. Schelling (*Elizabethan Playhouse*, 155) shows in his reconstruction a full-length curtain hanging at least a third of the distance down stage, but hiding only the middle of the balcony, which he extends on either side of this curtained space and provides with curtains of its own. Wegener thinks a traverse necessary to mark act endings, and admitting that it is never alluded to in the plays, explains this

¹ Wallace offers no evidence whatever for his generous allowance (48) to the Blackfriars of "curtains of any required number placed at any required distance between the balcony and the front of the stage."

² Inner curtains may have existed, but nobody has proved them nor shown their necessity. The rear stage may at times have been draped with arras, which, following the custom of Elizabethan houses, may have hung out a foot perhaps from the wall, and thus allowed opportunity for the concealment of persons, but it is hard to see how this or any other arrangement of inner curtains would provide for discoveries which would not be invisible to a large part of the audience.

by asserting that it was never drawn by an actor in character. Archer (*Tribune*, August 10) very justly calls this "an idle subtlety"; if stage managers found it necessary to mark act endings—a doubtful supposition—there were other possible ways of doing so, a flourish of trumpets for example, or the appearance of the theater servants to rearrange the stage. Baker's argument for the traverse is based on the opinion that scenes acted in the space below the balcony and removed from the audience would be invisible to many of the spectators and inaudible to more. He adds (88), "The use of them [curtains 'down stage'] makes possible a concealed placing of heavy properties, provides a larger stage for important dialogue, increases the movement of the play because one scene could be set while another was playing on the front stage, and was a very simple and obvious means to these important ends." He admits (95) that such a front curtain might not indeed conceal the space behind it from all the audience, and might, because it hid the balcony, cause serious difficulty. The first objection he considers of little moment; the second could, he thinks, be removed, if I rightly understand him, by the use of a lower curtain.

Lawrence,¹ however, urges that since the balcony was certainly used by spectators, any full-length curtain becomes impossible, and it requires little argument to show that a curtain low enough to leave the balcony visible to spectators in the yard or pit would be too low to conceal any appreciable part of the stage from the spectators in the galleries. Archer (*Quarterly*, 452-60) puts the case against the traverse with special force, noting especially the absence in Elizabethan drama of scenes ending in tableaux, which certainly would have arisen had the stage allowed them. A curtain anywhere on a projecting stage is an anomaly. When one remembers that there is not a single direct piece of evidence for this traverse on the public stage in the time of Shakespeare, and notes the usual reasons submitted in proof of it, one can but feel doubtful of its existence. The only important reasons are simply that (1) since most or all properties were arranged on the curtained stage, and (2) since the stage under

¹ In "The Situation of the Lords' Room," *Englische Studien* (1908), 402-12, Lawrence shows that the *Lords'* room was over the stage in the balcony, that before 1609 this position was abandoned by the gallants for a place upon the stage, or in the twelve-penny room next the stage—that marked *orchestra* by van Buchell in the Swan sketch.

the balcony would from its size and position be unsatisfactory for many of these scenes, some other curtained space must have existed. But since all propertied scenes were not played on a curtained space¹ the whole argument falls to the ground. As to the inadequacy of the rear stage, I can only emphasize what I said five years ago (*Some Principles*, I, 25) and what, so far as I have noted, has not been denied. In supposing that the rear stage was small and dark and that the actor upon it would be inaudible and invisible we are laboring, are we not, under the misleading influence of the Swan picture? A rear stage at the Swan, if such were possible, would have been separated from the audience by the long, narrow front stage, but the stage of the Fortune, to which the Globe was closely allied, was, as we are prone to forget, though indeed $27\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep, 43 feet broad. It was not narrow and deep but wide and comparatively shallow. Its rear stage may have been as much as 30 feet wide and even if it ran back to the outside wall of the frame, as all convenience would have forbidden, could have been but $12\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep. Even in the Roxana and Messallina pictures the curtained space seems at least 12 feet wide and the front stage hardly deeper than that. Such a rear stage was not very obscure. On such a stage, with the natural spreading forward of the action to the front stage, every surely "discovered" scene of the Elizabethan drama could have been effectively performed; no curtained space in front of it is at all necessary or indeed imaginable.

The relation of the curtain to the balcony, once this traverse is out of the way, is not difficult to determine. Child (301), the author of *Elizabethan Stage Theories* (551), Skemp for the usual theater (113), Archer (*The Fortune Theater*), Albright (frontispiece), Wegener for the Fortune and Globe (15), and the editors of the "First Folio" Shakespeare, all agree that the curtain hung from the lower edge of the balcony. Wallace for the Blackfriars (plan, p. 50) and Mönkemeyer (74) conceal the balcony by the curtain, Schelling supposes the middle of the balcony concealed (171), and Baker (84), though supposing the traverse to have hung in front of the balcony,

¹ I, *Honest Whore*, a play given at the Fortune Theater in 1604, shows this in the clearest possible way. At least three "interiors" furnished with properties were, from the directions, surely given on the front stage.

supports the stage curtain from its lower edge. All of course would admit the existence of a special balcony curtain.

Only one consideration points to the main stage curtain as hanging between the balcony and the audience—the scenes in which characters in the balcony watch others discovered below on the curtained stage. Albright, placing every located scene on the rear stage, runs into this difficulty with special frequency, but even if one does not agree with his assumption, one now and then meets this sort of situation. *David and Bethsabe* furnishes a clear example in Act I, 1, where as David sits above, the Prologue, drawing the curtain, reveals Bethsabe to him, bathing at a fountain below. Such scenes, in view of the probable shallowness of the rear stage and the perspective from which the greater part of the audience viewed them, would, I suggested (*Some Principles*, I, 11), be sufficiently real, even when the rear stage was directly below the balcony. Others have not been satisfied with this explanation. Dr. M. L. Spencer has privately suggested to me that perhaps the curtain was hung only a short distance in front of the balcony edge, from a projecting rod or wire, and finds some support for this in the Mesallina picture. Such an arrangement would have been seriously in the way, however, in plays where the “walls” were “scaled” or the balcony reached directly from the front stage. Creizenach (430-31) favors rather a projecting rear stage; Corbin (377), Lawrence (*Lords’ Room*, 407), Wegener (114), Albright (66), Archer (*Quarterly*, 471) would place the upper stage observer in one of the boxes above the oblique stage doors. Wegener’s argument is based mainly on the curious scene in *The Devil Is an Ass*, II, 2, where Wittipoll courts Mrs. Fitzdottrel, “acted,” says the Folio, “at two windows as out of two contiguous buildings.” Baker has the same suggestion for a somewhat similar situation in *Two Murders in One* (82). Skemp (122) sees nothing in Wegener’s argument, and suggests a curious and to me impossible arrangement of obliquely placed contiguous windows. I can see no reason why this particular scene could not have been presented in adjacent sections of any balcony like that pictured in the Swan sketch. As for the other scenes—those like *David and Bethsabe*, I, 1—they are so adequately explained by the obliquely placed boxes, that even though these boxes are unprovable,

like the oblique doors which they accompany, and though as Child notes (302) they might make the management of the balcony curtains rather complicated, they may perhaps be accepted as parts of the "typical" stage.

But another arrangement suggested by the Messallina picture and argued for by Skemp and Albright is not so easy to accept. To me, and I imagine to most, the horizontal line crossing the Messallina structure above the curtain represents merely a narrow finishing board placed at an angle to the main wall to protect (for the moment accepting either gentleman's idea that this picture is that of a public stage) the rear stage from rain through the festoons of the curtain. Skemp however sees in it (103) "a platform of considerable breadth which could very well be used as an upper stage"; and Albright says (66) (the italics are mine): "Messallina shows a small square curtain *at the rear of the gallery* which undoubtedly closes a window." Since Albright places most of the "window" scenes of the plays in the obliquely placed boxes over the doors, he has fewer difficulties to meet than Skemp, who, ignorant of this arrangement, as he seems to be of all contributions in English to the subject since Collier's, must explain for himself how he would on his stage arrange such scenes as *Volpone*, III, 2; *Blurt, Master Constable*, IV, 1; *Englishmen for My Money*, IV, 2. In all of these scenes there is direct communication between people in the window "above" and others on the stage below. Since this "shelf" appears only in the one picture, if indeed it appears there, and since it serves no real purpose—that pictorially it could better represent walls than could the windows behind it is an argument of little consequence—it is very unlikely that it formed any practical part of the "typical" theater.

Other questions concerning parts of the stage need not long detain us: Wegener argues (55) for an oval-shaped rear stage at the Blackfriars to agree with the balcony as he conceives it, and to allow for spectators on the stage below, all of which Skemp opposes (117 ff.). Albright cites (74) illustrations of trapdoors in the front and the rear stage and in the balcony; Baker finds hints in *Two Murders in One* for visible stairs running directly from the lower to the upper stage (82); Wegener (83, 96) notes the existence of a window below, as well as the more commonly referred to one above.

His suggestion that the rear stage may have been a platform which could be rolled forward (58) is of course merely conjecture, but had independently occurred to Archer (*Quarterly*, 446, n.). It has also been surmised that the rear stage was elevated (Wegener, 73; Chambers, 360; Child, 301; *Some Principles*, I, 25), but no one has as yet proved or disproved it.

All this discussion, indeed, concerning construction must be vague and undecisive so long as it deals with the "typical" theater. When we have said that some—unspecified—theater had an uncurtained stage, that in some other perhaps the doors and balcony were unhidden by the curtain, etc., etc., we are still not in a position to explain how any specific play was staged. Not until all the plays produced at a given theater have been found to yield a construction consistent and harmonious will our conclusions have much weight. Conjecture must give place to certainty, and inference and assumption to definite examples.

III

Throughout the preceding discussion it must have been apparent that many reconstructions of the stage depend not so much upon the direct evidence of the plays as upon the point of view from which the plays are approached. Every investigator seems dominated by certain assumptions, sometimes apparently unconscious, and, one suspects, assumptions too which are sometimes ill founded. It is this which increases the importance of a study of the principles, the ideals, and the conventions of the Elizabethan stage.

Recent investigations show two markedly different points of view of the stage of Shakespeare.¹ One group of students regards it

¹ Most writers leave the court out of the question, the only treatment of importance besides Reyher's of the masques in *Les masques anglais* being that of Helmholtz-Phelan. Some students discriminate sharply between the procedure at different theaters. Such is the trend of Wegener's whole dissertation; such also is Lawrence's opinion as shown for example in his article on *Title-boards*. At Paul's, he thinks, the multiple staging obtained, as it did at court (161); the public theaters attempted this but "finding the conjunctive properties inconvenient, began piecemeal to substitute inscribed locality boards for the cumbersome 'scenic symbols'" (160). The Globe and the Blackfriars differed somewhat at least (170): "Broadly speaking then there were two fashions, that of the public theater, apparently based upon the conventionalism of the innyard, and that of the private theaters, where closer and closer approximation seems to have been made as time went on to the methods of the court" (170). Thus Lawrence favors in general the plastic, platform stage rather than the crudely modern idea. So also do Schelling (171 ff., especially 177-78), Child (299-302), and the author of *Elizabethan Stage Theories*. Tolman admits the existence of the simultaneous staging, but inclines toward the modern;

as essentially modern but crude and with many exceptions and incongruities; the other looks at it as essentially other than modern, but with some scenes arranged more or less on the principles of modern staging. The difference is more than accepting or rejecting the principles of alternation; that theory is only one manifestation of the modernizing spirit—the feeling that traverses or front curtains must have existed is another; the opposition to sceneboards a third. The real difference is one of mental attitude, and influences almost every opinion one may hold concerning the Elizabethan stage. Which view is correct can be determined in two ways: the one by examination of the plays, to discover which theory has the more scenes to its credit—a study in almost numerical proportion; the other by a careful consideration of the principles upon which each view is based to determine their validity. The former method I shall perhaps employ in a later paper, since it requires considerable space and since here I am attempting only to summarize and explain what has already been suggested; the second method, the study of principles, we may follow more briefly and with almost as convincing results.

Of the two ways of regarding the stage the one presents it as intent, like our own, upon securing pictorial illusion. According to this theory the located and propertied scenes of the Elizabethan drama were all arranged behind the curtain, were then, as on a modern stage, “discovered,” and each played through consistently without change of imagined location. This demands a large curtained space, which in turn requires a traverse. The conception is so far entirely and unmistakably modern, admitting no more than does our own theater of departures from pictorial realism like the

the “First Folio” editors, though supposing the “trees” to have stood permanently on the front stage, are careful to place all interior scenes on the rear stage (*Antony and Cleopatra*, I, 5; III, 11); Skemp declares against alternation (114); so does Archer with telling arguments (458–59); Chambers accepts it but thinks it imperfect (359); Albright is an out-and-out “modernist”; Baker less insistently so. Creizenach, whose treatment of the stage and theater is the most comprehensive in plan since Malone’s and Collier’s, thinks apparently the alternation staging not worth considering, and is clearly opposed to the modern point of view.

So far discussion, if limited at all as to date, has centered about the years when Shakespeare was writing. Much of it however deals with a supposed “typical” procedure true of plays in 1559 and 1642 alike. This seems to me even more liable to prove misleading than the “typical” playhouse. I shall here limit myself in statements of my own opinion to the plays dating before 1603, not denying, indeed assuming as probable, that changes and development came as the years passed by.

sceneboards or the use of symbolic properties. Since, however, the Elizabethan performance was by hypothesis continuous, two differently set scenes could not occur in succession upon the rear stage. To allow for its rearrangement, therefore, unpropertied and unlocated scenes—the “streets” and “public places” of the editors of yesterday—were specially arranged by dramatists for production on the front uncurtained stage, scenes in principle exactly identical with the modern “stop-gap” or “carpenter” scenes. But since in any play (except a morality dealing with abstractions) made for any kind of stage, a majority of the scenes are by the very story located more or less definitely somewhere, the rear stage by this theory becomes as frequently employed as the front stage—indeed even more frequently—and we have—though the open platform is not denied—essentially a modern picture stage.¹

Opposed to this theory of an essentially modern stage is another which looks upon the Elizabethan stage as essentially unmodern.²

¹ Each supporter of this theory has suggested slight modifications of it, especially as regards the tests for scenes played upon the rear stage. The older alternationists made the use of doors or balcony a sufficient test, but the general adoption of the alcove rear stage in removing many “clashes” has also diminished the number of supposed proofs and has made this usage a mark rather of the front stage. Baker (88) employs a curtain for the concealed placing of heavy properties; Albright (129) stages there all propertied or located scenes, except, it would appear, scenes in a street or before a city (104, plate 12, 120); he also makes much of the fact, which I had previously noted (*Some Principles*, I, 24), that rear stage scenes usually filled the whole stage. Tolman uses the rear stage to expedite the arrangement of somewhat elaborate settings (18), and the “First Folio” editors place all interiors there, and by removing the curtains (by which I think they mean not the stage curtains, which are drawn back, but the hangings) employ it also to picture a house front or a city gate (*Antony and Cleopatra*, I, 5; III, xi; *Coriolanus*, I, 3, 4; *Troilus and Cressida*, IV, 3).

² It is difficult to suggest a name not misleading for this stage. I have called it a *simultaneous* stage only to find that this implied to certain readers a system of permanently placed properties, identical with that of mediaeval times. *Incongruous* emphasizes the modern attitude, sufficiently difficult to avoid without insisting upon it. *Symbolic* only partly expresses the idea, and *reader's stage*, while properly emphasizing the unlocated nature of the scene, implies to some persons that there was no real acting. Therefore perhaps the *platform* or *plastic stage* is least objectionable. The view of the Elizabethan stage as at least in part mediaeval was first suggested, I believe, by Brander Matthews in *The Development of the Drama*, 1903, who represented the stage, however, as a “mere platform” (225) “with absolutely no scenery of any kind” (198) and who thought of the space behind the curtain simply as a dressing-room. His view thus has only a general relation to the present theory, which, so far as I am concerned, arose from the impossibility of fitting a large number of Elizabethan plays into the strait jacket of alternation, and from noting the methods of the early French theater. The theory was first treated at length in Part II of *Some Principles of Elizabethan Staging*, published by me in June, 1905, but Mr. M. L. Spencer of Northwestern University had at the same time, as I have since learned, a dissertation with much the same conclusions nearly ready for publication, and Mr. John Corbin presented almost the same views, also arrived at quite independently, in the *Atlantic* for March, 1906, “Shakespeare and the Plastic Stage.” That three

From this point of view the Elizabethan playwright and stage manager of Shakespeare's day at least seem to have been most interested in getting their story told, clearly, to be sure, but with regard not so much to picturing the imagined location as to acting the story vigorously and expeditiously. "We may doubt" says Bradley (*Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, 388), "whether except in regard to costume [and, one may interpolate, spectacular effects] they seriously attended to the pictorial effect of the drama at all." It was pure drama, not yet united—shall we say subordinated—to pictorial art. The rear stage, in this view of Elizabethan drama, was employed with comparative infrequency, being used mainly to discover single characters in characteristic poses or actions; to begin a scene with a situation, thus accelerating the development of the plot; or to conceal elaborate or recurring set scenes, thus diminishing the labor of arranging the stage. Some of the properties were placed upon the front stage before the play began, some were brought in when required. Those put in place and left upon the stage were likely to be the larger and more cumbrous ones—the trees, the rocks, the thrones perhaps, or small unobtrusive ones used in successive scenes; those brought in were rather the chairs, beds, banquets, etc. This did not result in a cluttered or crowded stage; examination will show that in the usual play not more than one or two properties stood throughout the play upon the front stage. The properties on the front stage were not there to picture the scene, but rather to suggest it, or, more usually, because necessary to the action. The stage as a whole—of the rear stage I shall speak presently—did not attempt to picture the imagined

students should separately and almost simultaneously have reached the same conclusions, especially conclusions so novel and revolutionary as regards the English stage, is important as showing the inherent probability and truth of the theory. Since then similar opinions have been expressed by Schelling, Lawrence, and Jusserand; by the editors of the "First Folio" Shakespeare, who place "trees" as a permanent property on the front stage; by Tolman, who inclines however to the alternation staging; by Wegener as in force at the Swan and Globe; and by Anna Augusta Helmholtz-Phelan in her interesting and careful article on the staging at court. Creizenach, who approaches the whole subject with the most searching historical investigation and the most adequate knowledge of continental drama, accepted this view without qualification (406-14; 435; 437-38). Corbin (*Sun*) suggests that the woodland scenery in *The Midsummer Night's Dream* may have been set on the front stage while Bottom and his crew at the end of Act I were arranging for their comedy, and may have been removed at the end of Act IV during their scene there. This avoidance of the simultaneous setting, in view of Corbin's general attitude, seems rather unnecessary. Such setting and clearing of the stage during the play is more than incongruous; it would have been inartistic and distracting to the audience even with Kempe as Bottom.

scene—it was simply a platform upon which the story of the play was acted.

Which of these views is correct? Certainly the former is likely to seem the more reasonable and probable, but may not that be due to our experience only of a picture stage? As Corbin pointed out in his *Atlantic* article there is a plastic stage as well, with its own illusions quite as perfect as those of our own stage and perhaps in some ways more effective. "The Laocoön," he aptly remarks, "is as truly illusive as Leonardo's Last Supper." The Greek stage, the mediaeval, the Spanish, the French to the time of Corneille, not to mention those of the Orient, were not picture stages. Only in the last few decades with the introduction of box scenes has a truly picture setting for a large number of the very common scenes been employed even upon the English stage. Indeed Walkley interestingly maintains (16) that the picture stage in England dates from 1843 when "free trade in drama" allowed the erection of specifically dramatic playhouses. Thus the fact that the second theory demands a stage different from our own and apparently less realistic because less pictorial is no argument against but rather for it; it only makes it more difficult to understand.¹

Both theories are consistent in themselves and have been (in the opinion of their supporters) established from the plays. The second, however, takes the plays practically as they stand with few assumed or added directions; it explains every play without condemning any as incongruous, exceptional, or crude. The first, as its very basis, assumes that the directions are very incomplete: for the great majority of its rear stage scenes there is in the plays not a hint of the use of the curtains. This deficiency in the directions is variously explained: as a result of economy on the part of the printers; as due to the fact that certain scenes were conventionally staged in a

¹ It is rather remarkable, however, that even a modern audience can easily grasp the platform idea. In a recent school production—I give the incident for what it is worth—the following experiment was tried. Beyond announcing on the program that no picture was attempted, and that the stage was to be regarded merely as a platform, nothing was said of the staging, and not over four or five in the audience were acquainted with the various theories of Elizabethan stage management. It was not an academic but an average modern audience. A hedge six feet long and four feet high stood in a room scene for over an hour, and yet as a large number of people said, when asked at the end of the performance, was quite unnoticed until moved forward for a garden scene. Accepting the platform idea the audience felt no incongruity.

certain way, and that the specific directions were therefore unnecessary; as resulting from the presence of the author, who could thus explain to the company how each scene was to be given. It is curious, however, that few plays exist from the point of view of this theory complete in their directions. Certain plays indeed are, as I have already pointed out, more deficient in directions than others. Granted this, the theory which explains most easily the "unedited" prompters' copies, the simple reprintings of the stage manuscripts, would seem the more likely to be true. Significantly it is these very plays on which the second theory is mainly founded, while the "modernists" deal most successfully with those plays in which the precise directions seem to have been edited away. The plays with as detailed directions as we have—Percy's—perfectly agree with the theory of the platform stage, but are so incompatible with the picture stage that its upholders can only deny their validity. If directions must be assumed, should it not be on the basis of the unedited quartos rather than on that of modern imagination?

Quite as striking, however, as this wholesale assumption of directions is the insistence of the "modernists" upon the curtained space, despite the impossible conclusions this forces upon them. Given a divided stage, a front part close to the audience, and a rear farther removed, the former must certainly be most employed. The instinctive desire of the speaker to be near his audience, the advantages of sight and hearing would bring this about, even though the rear stage was otherwise satisfactory for acting purposes. The plays support this idea. Explicit directions for the use of the curtained space are comparatively rare, and the opinion of scholars is equally adverse to it.¹ Since the curtained space beneath the balcony is thus admittedly unsatisfactory, the "modernists," insistent upon as complete pictorial illusion as possible, are forced into some explanation of how all the important scenes, according to their view, come to be set in the curtained space. Baker, for example, devises the traverse to hang farther down the stage, and plunges himself into all the diffi-

¹ Skemp (114): "The use of the inner stage is purely incidental." Wegener (40): "Die Hinterbühne dagegen war, weil vom Dach beschattet, im Verhältnis dunkel, auch bei guten Wetter." Baker (88): "The space under the balcony was a bad place for important scenes." Albright (138): "The action was always carried down as near the audience as possible." It should be noted that some of these opinions exaggerate the disadvantages of the rear stage.

culties which we have seen that occasions. Albright (137) has another solution. Once the properties were shown in the rear stage, arranged after the most orderly of picture stage methods, they were, he says, moved out upon the front stage in the midst of the scene by the actors themselves. That properties were indeed sometimes moved about within the scene anybody will admit, but to make this at all an ordinary procedure is surely unreasonable. What is the use of all this shifting; why have a curtain at all if we must at once begin setting the scene; why not place the properties directly upon the front stage and be done with it? Arrangement between scenes would take less time and less interrupt the play. There must be some extraordinary justification for so unparalleled a custom. That justification is of course found in the belief that the Elizabethans were insistent upon pictorial illusion, and that only by this means could illusion be secured and at the same time opportunities for effective acting.

But we know that the Elizabethans were not insistent upon pictorial illusion. There were upon their stage certain customs¹ quite opposed to it. These I have discussed at length in another place; now I can only refer to them (*Some Principles*, II, 5 ff.). Among these was the unlocated scene.² Another is the change of scenes before the eyes of the audience, occurring in two very common ways: one, illustrated in *Romeo and Juliet*, I, 4, 5; "They [Romeo and his friends supposed outside the house of Capulet] march about the stage, and Serving men come forth with their napkins"; when the scene is supposed to have changed to the interior of the house; the other occurring in *Arden of Feversham* (III, 6), when in thirty lines a journey of several miles is supposed to have taken place before us. In citing these instances I at first suggested that the former change might have been indicated by drawing a curtain. Now it seems to me less likely; if a curtain were employed, why in so precise a direction was its use not indicated, and why did the servants *come forth*—they might as easily have been discovered. No such explanation would suffice for the other instance, only one of a large number, which Albright conveniently ignores. The "First Folio" editors cite

¹ Creizenach (406-14) discusses many of these with copious illustrations.

² Archer has an especially effective treatment of these scenes, *Quarterly*, 447.

several similar to this from Shakespeare under the name of *scene shifting* scenes (*Antony and Cleopatra*, 174-75). Sometimes, to continue the unmodern features of the stage, it represented two widely separate places at the same time (the tents in *Richard III*, V, 3); sometimes it bore properties incongruous to each other (*Parasitaster*, IV, i). The use of sceneboards is another custom quite opposed to modern ideas,¹ as is also the admission of symbolic properties, and the "thrusting out" and bringing on of beds, etc.

The existence of these customs is not generally denied and I shall not therefore discuss them at the length they deserve; upon the platform stage they are perfectly explicable; the "modernists" alone must call them exceptions, incongruities. But such exceptions go far toward disproving the rule; it is hard to conceive a picture stage admitting any such discordant elements without completely destroying itself. Could the Elizabethan gentleman who sat on a stool under "Africa" be greatly impressed by the pictorial illusion of the scene in "Asia" being enacted before him; was the groundling, shading his eyes with his hand to keep out the sun during the moonlight courtship in *Romeo and Juliet*, disturbed by the presence of the trees upon the front stage perhaps, during the scene in Juliet's bedroom? How could there be general pictorial illusion on a stage where a throne came creaking down from above in plain sight of the audience, where a bed was "thrust out," two tents miles apart erected side by side, a tree² shown in a room scene, or a journey of several miles indicated by passing across the stage? These seem more than exceptions; on a picture stage they are impossible; neither can they be dismissed as "crudities"—they must be explained.

On the supposition of a platform stage, these customs may be justified as natural survivals from the mediaeval multiple staging, but to question this explanation of their origin does not disprove them. Albright alone among students of the subject seems desirous of pressing modern ideas of propriety back even into mediaeval days.

¹ Briefly discussed by me (*Some Principles*, I, 20-21) and fully by Lawrence in an admirable article, *Jahrbuch*, 1909. See also Baker (76-80), who thinks them "by 1600 quite unusual," and Wegener (122-25). Conrad's "Bemerkungen," *Jahrbuch*, 1910, adds little of importance to Lawrence's argument.

² Albright's supposition that the tree in *Parasitaster* was off the stage is certainly wrong. The direction plainly says, "Whilst the Act is playing Hercules and Tiberio enter: Tiberio climbs the tree, and is received above by Dulcimet," etc.

To do so he is forced to assume not merely directions but whole stages as well. Even if he were completely successful in his contention, however, it would only slightly affect one's view of the Elizabethan stage. The idea of it as a platform stage rests first of all on these customs already mentioned. Only their explanation could be affected by arguments concerning the staging in field or street, and then but slightly, for the real difficulty arises in the transition period from outdoor to indoor production. One may grant to Albright, if he insists, that in mediaeval days the spectator forgot he was in a church and for the moment imagined himself in Galilee or Nazareth or Jerusalem because there stood before him a symbolic manger or an isolated cross; one may suppose that the player on the Valenciennes stage was scrupulously careful to avoid getting in front of "Hell" when he was supposed to be on the shores of "Galilee," or before "Heaven" when really at the "Temple," for fear of disturbing the clear illusion in the spectator's mind. One may even grant the quite unproved assumption that the circular plan of *The Castle of Perseverance* was the usual method of staging such moralities. All these, while scarcely true, one may for the moment admit. To say nothing of the fact that in every one of these cases there is the essential incongruity of presenting things far apart as close together, and that there seems to have been no attempt to use more than symbolic settings, the real difficulty remains. When plays came to be given in halls, when at court plays were given with various "houses" all upon the stage at once, it is not conceivable that the stage was imaginatively partitioned off into little sections, one for each throughout the play. Such a notion, which some have misunderstood me to imply, is as absurd as to suppose the "chaotic staging," "the confusion of locality" that Albright seems to think I defend. There is nothing chaotic or confused about the tent scene in *Richard III* or the even more striking situation in *The Three English Brothers* where the stage for the moment simultaneously represents Persia, Spain, and England. The chaos and confusion lie simply in the mind of him who insists upon looking at such a scene from the point of view of the modern stage. Instead, should we not frankly admit that the stage as a whole was unlocalized, that it was merely the stage, while the unpictured imagined locality, made clear,

whenever the author saw fit, by textual allusion, by properties, or perhaps by signboards, was now here, now there, without necessarily any change of the stage setting?¹

As for the other recent studies tending toward a modern point of view, Professor Baker's interesting and stimulating chapter full of

¹ I do not further discuss Albright's *The Shakespearian Stage*. As a summary of opinion from the distinctly modern point of view it is convenient and fairly complete; though in allowing slight pauses even between scenes it surrenders the cardinal principle of alternation and leaves for it little justification; its treatment of the pictures, except for the curious misunderstanding of the Messallina balcony, is the best yet published; its discussion of the development of the Restoration stage is suggestive and valuable, but its main purpose to extend modern ideals of propriety not only into Elizabethan days but into the Middle Ages as well is certainly unsuccessful.

Concerning the staging of the Scripture plays and Albright's theories of them I shall here say nothing; it is, I understand, fully discussed in a doctor's dissertation now in press by M. L. Spencer. As for the moralities which Albright accuses me of neglecting, I carefully read them all, but found in them nothing sufficiently definite to be of value. Albright makes a great show of treating them, and seems to suppose that the abstract "nowhere" in which their scene is laid is due to the necessities of staging. Instead it is quite as much the result of the very nature of their stories. To the only moralities of any bearing at all upon the development of staging, those "with located and propertied action," he devotes exactly one page, discusses exactly one play, *Thersites* (not a morality, to be sure), and even in that neglects to mention the striking example of "dramatic distance" which this play affords. *Thersites'* mother, though plainly upon the stage during his fight with Miles, is supposed to be quite ignorant of it. This Albright does not note. The other plays he cites of this group but does not discuss I shall also leave aside; they each were I think staged in the mediaeval manner but they do not offer sufficiently clear-cut evidence to be of service in convincing students doubtful of it. In dealing with the examples of customs which I cited contrary to modern practice, Albright has one unfailing remedy, which I had indeed suggested as possible in certain instances—to draw the curtain—but fails to explain why in every case the direction to that effect is lacking and to feel the cumulative effect of the instances noted. With all his unsupported use of the curtain he is able to explain only a few instances of change of scene and of "incongruous" properties. These I myself indicated might perhaps so be avoided, but in view of other stage customs such explanation seemed straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. One class of incongruous properties—the small unobtrusive ones—even he admits to the Elizabethan stage. Concerning these other customs—the use of sceneboards and of symbolic settings, the instances of dramatic distance, the shifts of scene which cannot possibly be explained by use of the curtain, he is silent. He indeed produces his impression of consistency by ignoring everything to the contrary. He assumes to deal with the whole Elizabethan drama, but reads only 150 of its 500 plays, and these in modern editions; he does not see the inapplicability, not to say the danger, of arguing from Restoration plays and modern melodramas in an investigation where the very point involved is whether one shall adopt the modern point of view. In his remark that "incongruity never existed as a principle of either pre-Elizabethan or Elizabethan staging" I quite agree with him; I will go farther—it has never existed on any stage. But what one age is undisturbed by another finds out of place, and the platform staging properly regarded is not incongruous at all. The great principle which I would emphasize and which Albright neglects is that we must look at the Elizabethan stage through Elizabethan eyes, and determine what that point of view was, not by what we imagine, but by what the other customs of the stage show to have been true. We must escape from the twentieth-century or even the eighteenth-century point of view. To have convinced so ardent a modernist that "incongruities" existed at all is, I think, an achievement, and when Albright has read more of the "unedited" plays in quarto and folio, undisturbed by the conjectures of modern editors, he can hardly fail to abandon his distinctly modern point of view.

original suggestions, and Dr. Tolman's careful and persuasive discussion of five scenes from Shakespeare,¹ arranged he thinks for the outer stage in order to allow time for the setting of the rear stage—the conclusions of both are an entirely different matter from the hard and fast alternation views prevalent five years ago or the anachronistic ideas of Albright. Perhaps Baker overemphasizes the advantages of the traverse and the disadvantages of the rear stage, and Tolman may not sufficiently allow for other causes than staging which might have led to the introduction of the present form of the scenes he cites. Humorous or emotional relief, time for some actor playing two parts to make up or change his costume, the desire of someone for a better opportunity to display his talents—all of these seem at least plausible reasons. Yet the opinions of both investigators are not incompatible with a view of the Elizabethan stage as essentially unmodern.

I have already indicated briefly how far this unmodern view of the stage has been accepted by recent writers. As a new and almost revolutionary idea of the Elizabethan stage it is perhaps vague and a little difficult clearly to formulate. Yet its main contentions are clear enough—that the Elizabethan stage manager made more use of the front stage, at least in the time of Shakespeare, than he did of the rear, that he staged interior scenes there as well as upon the rear stage, that he was tolerant of properties “incongruous” to the scene in progress, of dramatic distance, and of shifts of scene with actors upon the stage; in short that he cared little for pictorial illusion but aimed rather at economy of time and labor. Thus he did not fail to furnish his plays with all the properties necessary in the action, but perhaps did scarcely more than that. To him the front stage at least was merely a stage, no matter what the story acted there or the properties displayed upon it. As for the connection of the performances at court, at the private and at the public theaters, perhaps Lawrence, Child, and Helmholtz-Phelan are not far off in saying that the court performances were more richly furnished with properties, and that therefore (this is, however, my own conclusion) they were thus patently more “incongruous” than the performances in the theater though no more so in principle.

¹ *Rich.* II, III, iv; *M. of V.*, III, v; *A. and C.*, III, i; *Cymb.*, II, 1; *Winter's T.*, V, 2. The Law of Re-entry may explain the first, third, and fifth of these.

Concerning the employment of the curtained space, in spite of all the writings of the "alternationists," we are yet very ill informed, and have therefore misunderstood the basis of the alternation of scenes which really did exist and which in attacking the stringent rigidity of the German theories I took pains expressly to admit. I think we shall discover that the stage manager felt no necessity of placing located scenes or even propertied scenes all on the rear stage, but did do so whenever in the particular play that was the easiest and most expeditious way of staging them. Not pictorial illusion but economy of time and labor guided his choice, except that usually the front stage was preferred, other things being equal, because of the greater effectiveness it made possible for the acting. When the rear stage was employed, however, I am ready to believe that it may have been furnished, not only with the properties necessary for the action but also with others to make it really pictorially appropriate. There may even have been painted hangings put up to increase the illusion—the complete separation from the audience, the enclosure on three sides, permitting any amount of arrangement, and the known furnishings of the stage being adequate for the demands of the usual play. Indeed, for interior scenes the Elizabethan enclosed rear stage would have been more realistic than any other and later arrangement of the English stage until the introduction of box settings. (Yet one must note that in the time of Shakespeare we are perfectly sure that not all interiors were staged there.) Perhaps as the years passed this opportunity was taken advantage of and in the rear stage the modern idea of a picture stage arose. All this seems to me, though unproved, conceivable. A critic for whose opinions I have the greatest respect and to whose suggestions I owe much, has in a private communication termed my plan of Elizabethan staging, "a jumble of systems." I am not sure but he is right, and I too. Was not the Elizabethan stage with its enclosed rear stage and its uncurtained front platform indeed a combination of the mediaeval and the modern? Have we not in its study a delicate problem in research—to determine just how far at any given date and in any given theater the one element over-balanced the other? It is indeed so delicate and our sources are so fragmentary that I doubt if we shall ever be able to speak with

definiteness concerning any particular year or even decade. But we should be able to trace some sort of gradual progression, or at least to say with definiteness that there was dominant in a certain period the one element or the other, the plastic or the pictorial.

For the period ending in 1603 it seems certain that it was plastic and unmodern, rather than pictorial. What it was down to 1614 I hope to make clear in a future study. Certainly when so well-informed a critic of the modern stage as Walkley finds the picture stage not coming to its own until the nineteenth century, the presumption is that in the seventeenth it was not particularly prominent.

APPENDIX

A few matters less discussed or of less importance may briefly be mentioned here. Opinion is agreed, so far as I have noted, that the performances took place in the afternoon; opened with a prologue at the third sounding of a trumpet; continued for two hours (though one need not, as do some, limit the poetic statements of the prologues to exact minutes and seconds) and closed with an epilogue and perhaps a jig; that female parts were played by boys; and that costumes were rich and expensive though not geographically or historically appropriate. What basis there is for Baker's idea that the prologue was delivered from a balcony box (70) I cannot imagine. A very large number of plays show clearly that the prologue was spoken on the lower stage; for example, *David and Bethsabe* and the *Whore of Babylon*. The evidence is also unknown to me for Schelling's statement (*Elizabethan Playhouse*, 153) that in early times a piece of ordnance or a cannon on the stage was shot off to announce the beginning of the performance. To the researches of Malone and Collier on prices of admission, modern studies have added little definite information, but Baker (65-67) has some interesting remarks.

Properties.—Only a few years ago Sidney Lee (*English Miscellany* presented to Doctor Furnivall, 248) could speak of the Elizabethan stage as a bare platform, and this belief was indeed general. To show this characterization to be untrue was one purpose of my *Trees on the Stage of Shakespeare*. If the stage employed properties cumbrous as these may naturally have been, others easier to obtain and manage must certainly have been made use of. No recent authors doubt that the stage was sufficiently furnished; even Mr. Archer, who questioned my conclusions (*Under the Greenwood Tree*), admitted that trees and bushes were used on the Elizabethan stage. He was, however, naturally moved to humor and ridicule at the "half-dozen mangy Christmas trees" which he seems to imagine I contemplated. The humor one can understand, but why "half a dozen" and why "mangy"? To us any sort of property tree upon the Elizabethan open

stage can be only ridiculous: but so, too, would be the "descending cloud" or the "bed thrust out"—both common enough. Perhaps we may enjoy imagining *As You Like It* on Shakespeare's stage better without than with property trees, but that is no sign that the Elizabethan audience would or did so enjoy seeing it. We need not suppose "half a dozen" trees; I distinctly specified that under the principle of symbolic setting "two, three, five" could as well suggest a forest as a larger number, though perhaps some manager, bitten with the fever of a "stupendous production," would now and then employ the whole equipment of the playhouse. As for the "mangy," one can indeed imagine such inefficient vegetation, but surely neither the ingenuity of Elizabethan craftsmen nor the poverty of Elizabethan actors necessitated it. I have noted no other argument against the use of "tree" settings except perhaps Mönkemeyer's opinion (82) that directions in prompters' copies show the whole setting of the stage, and that therefore in *The Pilgrim* the stage furnishings for "woods" were merely two chairs and that the music of the forest was suggested by "pot-birds." Yet the only properties necessarily noted in the prompters' copies would be those which had to be shifted; trees, if once put in place, were perhaps not removed during the play.

I have noted no objection but Archer's to my idea that trees were used to suggest solitude and desolation. The objection is briefly—I am forced to quote from memory—that if trees on the stage could suggest solitude and desolation, a solitary scene would suggest the mention of trees, and need not mean that they were present on the stage. This is acute but not convincing; why not references to "raging billows" or "desert sands" or any other appropriate thing rather than to the often inappropriate trees? Since these references are sometimes, it would appear, almost dragged into the text some explanation certainly seems necessary; that explanation it seemed to me my suggestion furnished.

Was there scenery, pictorial decoration, painting in perspective? Schelling (*Elizabethan Playhouse*, 153) says yes, even in the public theaters and in the lifetime of Shakespeare; Corbin (*Atlantic*, 375) admits it to the "heavens" and background when the rear stage or balcony were not in use; Baker (96) would drop painted cloths on the balcony and shows the Harvard stage in illustration (280) arranged as the deck of a ship; Child (303-4) denies painted scenery to the public stage but admits it at court; Albright would seem to agree with Corbin; Mrs. Stopes's article, largely upon this subject, adds little to our knowledge, and Stevenson's idea (323) that the public theaters could not afford scenery is certainly erroneous. If Henslowe's company could spend the sums it did upon costumes, it could also have bought the little scenery *necessary* for the usual Elizabethan play. The difficulty in supposing scenery lies not so much in obtaining it as in finding a place for it on the stage.

Stairs of the auditorium.—Archer, in the valuable and suggestive plan of the Fortune Theater prepared at his suggestion by Mr. William Godfrey, places stairs to the galleries at either side of the stage as well as at the opposite end of the yard. The Fortune contract, as Archer notes, provides for "stairs—without and within," "contrived" as in the Globe, but the fact that "none of the representations we possess of round or octagonal theaters (show) any sign of an external staircase" causes him to place these stairs "without," outside the galleries to be sure, but within the yard. Since all the exterior representations, however, are made from the south and show apparently no doors for entrance as well as no stairs, the argument is not so weighty as it might at first appear. Perhaps the doors and stairs were all on the north side toward the city; perhaps they were where Archer places them. Child (288) quotes a suggestion that the larger round substructure shown in the familiar 1610 drawing of the Globe "enclosed a passage leading from the entrance door (or doors) to various entrances to the yard."

Scene division.—Prölsz (56) says that Shakespeare based his scene divisions not exclusively upon clearance of the stage but rather upon the change of the fancied place of action, and Albright (155), therefore, criticizes my using a clearance of the stage to mark scene division as not in accord with Elizabethan custom. Prölsz himself makes no statement as to general Elizabethan practice, and he is a bold man who would do so in view of the variance in Elizabethan prints, with which, however, Albright admits his unfamiliarity. Jonson in his Folio followed the classical method, and most quartos are undivided into acts and scenes; some, however, like *I, Honest Whore*, use the principle of stage clearance (cf. also the "plot" of *Tamar Cam.*). In this play, scene divisions are not numbered nor indicated until scene 7, a number to be arrived at only by dividing a street scene at a point where the stage is empty (scenes 1 and 2). In view of the large number of scenes in which the fancied place of action changes without the actors leaving the stage, so that if change of place became the criterion a division of scene might fall in the middle of a sentence, it is scarcely necessary to bother much about the particular principle adopted; the Elizabethans apparently did not. Division on the basis of stage clearance, though perhaps exaggerating the number of scenes, is not otherwise misleading. It is not a question of being Elizabethan or non-Elizabethan, but of being consistent and clear.

The capacity of the Swan Theater is a vigorously disputed point. DeWitt's statement that it would accommodate 3,000 persons has provoked considerable discussion, Baker (72-75) and Wallace (49-51) denying its probability, Schelling (161) doubting it, Corbin (371-73) and Child (293) accepting it, and Archer suggesting (*The Fortune Theater*) that it is an exaggerated estimate of the capacity with the stage removed. All this is of course important as establishing or throwing doubt upon the authority of DeWitt, but from the point of view of drama is not the important question, not so

much how many persons could be crowded in, as how large was the auditorium and how far the average spectator was from the stage? We know that the Fortune Theater was one of the largest in London and yet in its external measurements it was only 80 feet square. It, with the other Elizabethan theaters, was therefore relatively small (see the suggestive plans drawn to scale of various famous theaters printed in Brander Matthews' *Study of the Drama*, where the Fortune however [60] is given 84 feet), and the dramatic art of the period intended for a performance as intimate as that in our small modern theater—perhaps because of the projecting stage even more intimate.

Place of orchestra.—Wegener (151) misunderstands the Swan picture and places the orchestra in the place so marked on the drawing. Even Child (307) does the same thing. Of course, as has several times been pointed out, the word there refers to the more expensive seats in the "gentlemen's rooms." The music was stationed sometimes in the tiring-room, or behind the curtain; sometimes it was placed in the balcony above the stage. On this subject see Lawrence's scholarly article in the *Jahrbuch* for 1908, "Music in the Elizabethan Theater," which, one may note, Child omits from his bibliography.

Continuity of performance.—Practically everyone seems agreed that the Elizabethan performance must have been fairly continuous, except that Albright, compelled apparently by the clashes inevitable even with his elastic theory of alternation, allows (129) slight pauses between two differently propertied scenes, besides the more generally admitted act intervals marked by music. Neither must the interpolation of jigs, dances, or fun-making by the clown be forgotten. Act pauses are not however supposed to have been tolerated at the Globe, largely, it seems, from the well-known passage in the Induction to *The Malcontent* (Lawrence, *Music*, 40; Wallace, 10; Tolman, 17). But why should the phrase "To abridge the not received custom of musick in our theatre" especially apply to the act interludes? The Globe used music during the plays—everyone admits that; may the phrase not rather refer to omission of the songs (in any case only dragged in) because at the moment the company lacked an actor to sing them, just as at another time *Twelfth Night* seems to have been carelessly revised to relieve Viola from singing? Or again may not the *Malcontent* reference be to the "not received" musical entertainment which Wallace (117) thinks was customary at the Blackfriars before the play? Whatever the explanation of this passage, Lawrence's reason for the abridgment of the music—the saving of time—cannot be the right one, for it was to fill up this time that the additions to the play were made, in order apparently that the performance might reach the standard length. In any case *The Malcontent*, II, i, "whilst the act is playing," shows that sometimes at the Globe there were musical intermissions, as does also the direction from *Midsummer Night's Dream*, "They sleep all the Act," cited by Corbin and Archer.

Spectators on the stage.—Wallace devotes a chapter (xi) to proving that this custom arose at the Blackfriars, stating that the earliest known allusion to it dates from 1598 (130), that it arose at the Blackfriars because of the shape of the stage (48), and that thence it spread to the other theaters and to the continent.¹ There is not space here properly to discuss this topic but certain facts cause one to doubt his conclusions. Wallace bases much of his argument upon the idea that only on a stage like that he imagines for the Blackfriars could spectators have sat without interfering with the view of others. Yet Wegener finds a different but to him equally satisfactory arrangement in his oval-shaped rear stage, and Archer's plan for the Fortune allows, it seems to me, adequate places for gallants where they would not have interfered with the sight of other spectators. Indeed when we remember that if the *Gul's Horne-booke* be true, they did interfere to a great degree, especially with the groundlings, that they probably sat on low stools or stretched themselves upon the rushes, and that they could easily have grouped themselves, in the Fortune for example, around the ends of the 40-foot stage, the whole argument loses its weight.

As for the allusions Wallace cites as clear-cut in his favor, almost every one seems to me to imply exactly the contrary. First of all he denies all force to Percy's *Fairy Pastoral* (written for Paul's at least by 1601) with its "concourse of the People on the Stage." Even if we grant that the play never was performed the remark points to a usual condition which Percy certainly did not make up out of whole cloth. The statement in the Induction to Marston's *What You Will* where one gallant says to another, "Let's place ourselves within the curtains for good faith the stage is so very little, we shall wrong the general eye else very much," loses all point if all gallants were so considerate; it, like the similar passage in *The Malcontent*, was a clever rebuke. This later passage, which, in Wallace's opinion "explicitly denies" the custom at the Globe, to me, as it does to Skemp, tends rather to establish it—otherwise why all this fuss about it? Sly knew he was to be hissed, one may also note. The actors are merely expressing their dislike of the custom; would the company at the Globe have done so had the nuisance only concerned their rivals at the Blackfriars? Wallace does not consider at all the presence on the stage of Cordatus and his friend in *Every Man in His Humour* (Globe, 1599), which would be most inappropriate could they not pose as ordinary spectators. Moreover Wallace's high-handed dismissal of the evidence of the satirists—Middleton and Dekker with their very precise evidence for the custom in the public theaters—seems quite unjustified. The custom could so easily have originated at performances in guildhalls, in schools, or in private houses, where important

¹ C. R. Baskerville's admirable article, "The Custom of Sitting on the Elizabethan Stage," *Modern Philology*, April, 1911, which appeared after the text of this paper was set up, is a complete refutation of Wallace's reasoning.

persons would occupy prominent positions, very probably upon the stage, that to claim it as a mark of the exclusive influence of the Blackfriars seems extremely hazardous.¹

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¹ B. Neuendorff's *Die englische Volksbühne im Zeitalter Shakespeares* (Berlin, 1910) was not received until this article was in the hands of the printer. Here there is space only for a brief reference—much less than it deserves, for it is notably sane and complete. Its distinctive feature is its threefold classification of the Elizabethan stages as (1) lacking a curtain and a rear stage (the "Red Bull" picture, Neuendorff holding that the hanging at the back is merely a hanging hiding the exit and not a real curtain); (2) lacking a curtain but with the lower stage divided into two parts by pillars (Swan); (3) possessing a curtain and a rear stage (the Messallina picture). The curtainless stage receives unusual emphasis, the word *curtain* or *discovered* often being interpreted as referring to the bed curtain or the hangings around the throne. Proof for the lack of a curtain is found in the frequent directions to bring in certain properties, and these curtainless stages are held to have continued until late in the Elizabethan period. Neuendorff considers Prölsz's Law of Re-entry (that no character shall leave the stage and immediately re-enter if the scene is meanwhile supposed to have changed) at some length, and finds it of the greatest influence upon dramatic construction. It accounts for the many scenes beginning or ending with a monologue, and for the insertion of speeches or even scenes otherwise unnecessary. With a double or triple plot the dramatist was less embarrassed by this principle of construction. There were, however, certain exceptions to the law; not whole speeches were necessary to mark the change—a few lines, or even business alone might serve ("alarms," "a retreat sounded"); after dumbshows or the act interval the law did not apply; nor did it when the person who had just gone out re-entered with a large number. He finds my proof of the use of "trees" open to criticism, but completely dismisses the alternation theory. His most serious criticism of my conclusions seems to be that though the platform stage was in earlier days the prevailing form, it later ceased to be so. As I expressly limited the application of my statements to the years before 1603, and as Neuendorff himself cites plays of late date as examples of the curtainless stage, we are I think on essential matters not much at variance. I regret not to be able to summarize his work in detail.

W. H. Godfrey's article, "An Elizabethan Theatre" (*Architectural Review*, April, 1908), escaped my attention until too late for use in this paper.